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Keys to Shakespeare's Treasure House

A Series of Questions Covering
Certain of the
Bard's Plays

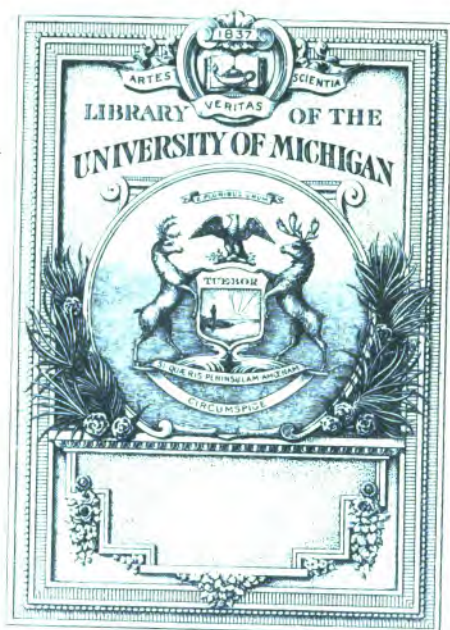
Designed to Aid
Students and to
Point a Way for the
Desultory Reader.

Hamlet

By

Mrs. Charles Tidwell Phelan

Dallas, Texas

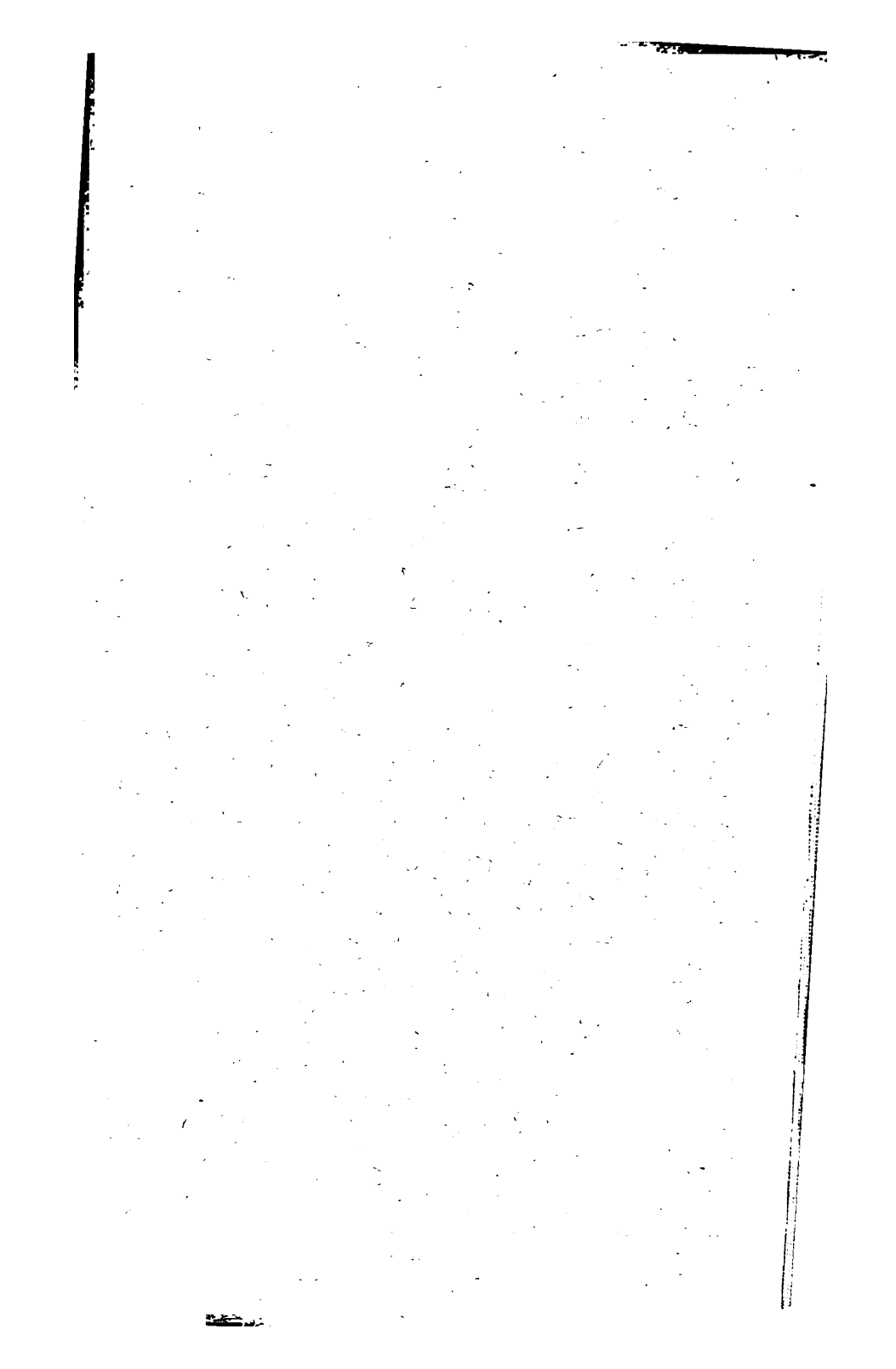


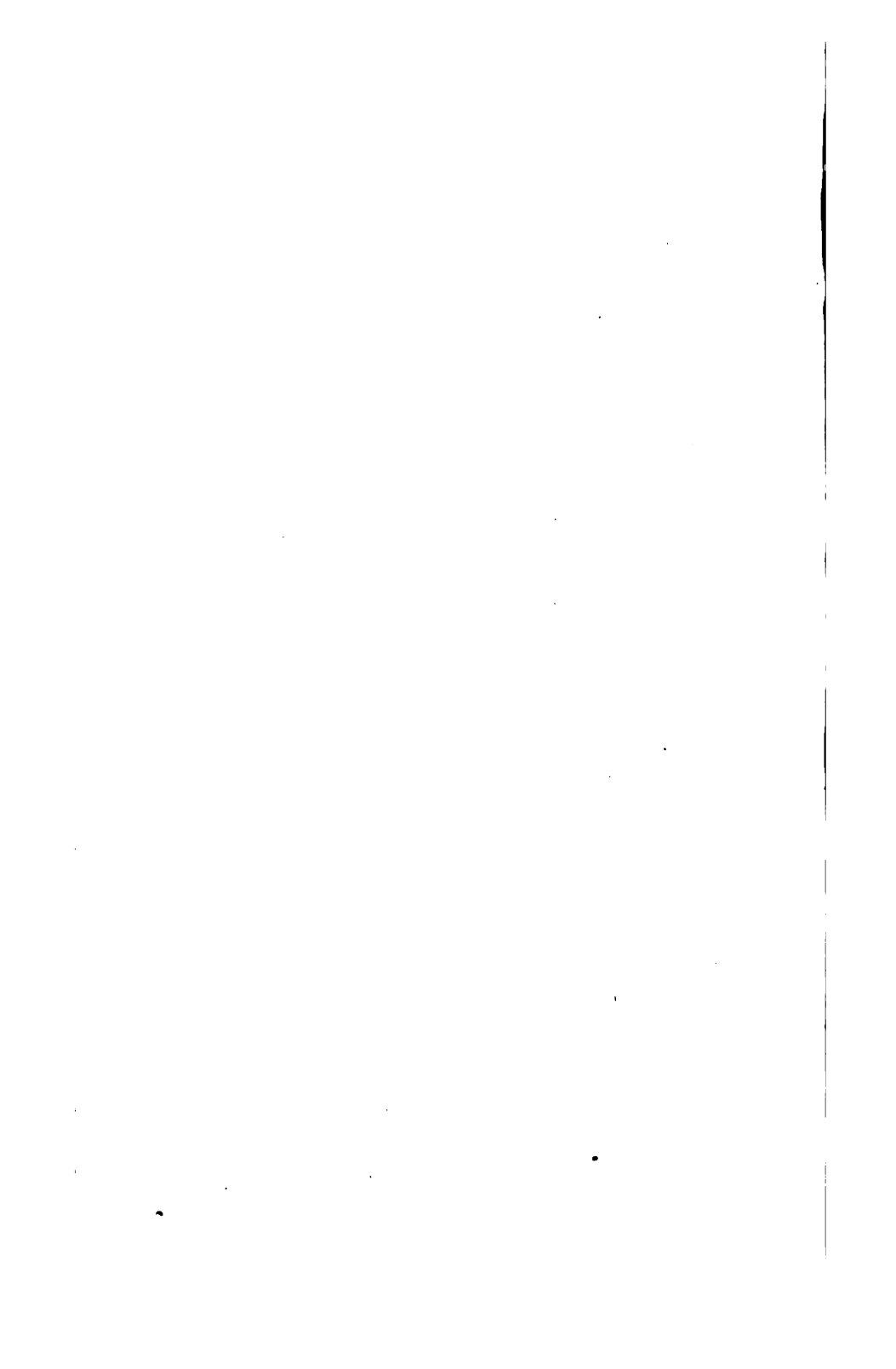
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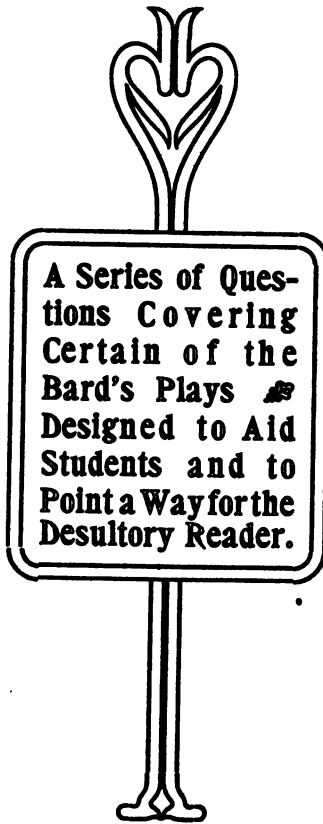
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Keys to Shakespeare's Treasure House



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By
Mrs. Charles Tidwell Phelan
Dallas, Texas

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CITY OF BOSTON*

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MRS. CHARLES TIDWELL PHELAN





Explanatory



At the first blush, so pretentious a title as the one chosen for the following series of questions may appear to mean no more than rashness and gross presumption on the part of the compiler, that all the intellectual wealth of Shakespeare lies under lock and key, and that she alone has the means of throwing open the doors to the world. But it will be noticed that "Keys"—the plural—is used, and this is the compiler's salvation.

For thereby is implied any number of locked doors and any number of keys, and refuge may always be taken behind the indisputable fact, that all the keys have never been gathered into one hand. His genius so measured the expanse and plumbed the depths of all humanity, that nothing less than the entire world of mankind can respond to his infinitely various touches; but it is possible to take advantage of the labors of those who have devoted years of study to these dramas, and by the method adopted, gain a wider knowledge and a quickened appreciation of the work for ourselves. Hence, this series.

The object is to search for the impulse behind the thought; or, in other words, to penetrate as far as possible toward the spring that controls the engine. To do this means to study everything in the drama, in its relation to every other thing. In Shakespeare there are no non-essentials. The following questions aim at the heart of the drama; they are given, not merely to outline the skeleton of the play, but to invest the skeleton with muscle, life and soul.

Discovering the importance of things in their given place is like studying finality—once the habit fastens itself to you, there is no getting away from it. Why leave for another to do that which you can do yourself? Men do not succeed one another; each has his own place in life, and ought to fill it.

If the student is directed into paths hitherto hidden from him, or overlooked; if the general reader obtains a wider comprehension of the master mind, and is inspired to a real appreciation of what it gave to the world, the purpose of this work is to some

extent accomplished. All the keys are by no means here, "since"—to quote from the lines on his monument at Stratford—

"* * * * * all that he hath writ

Leaves living art but page to serve his wit."

Balance and Proportion are two of the main ideas wrought out in the Tragedy of Hamlet. The first example of this idea is in the ethics of the play, when God is weighed in the balance with Philosophy—materialism versus spiritualism, belief in immortality versus disbelief; reliance upon providence versus howling under fate; the finite versus the infinite.

There is an example of balance and proportion which taken alone, would show Shakespeare's genius in the delineation of character. It is Hamlet's father, mother, uncle, and himself, constituting one family group, versus Polonius, Ophelia, Laertes, constituting another.

In the first group we find a family who at the beginning are the happiest and the most trusting one could imagine. A King, Queen, and Prince—all things being equal one would never suspect even a shadow of sorrow; but when the fiends Ambition and Lust come, brigand-like, demanding and forcing entrance, then we find the home broken, a father gone, a mother's fair name tarnished, a son's heart rent in twain, and in the midst of this once happy home sits the man who scruples at nothing,—then suspicion lurks, guilt cowers, murder is rampant, virtue dies, reason is almost o'erthrown, deception flourishes, honor is only a name, and all the fury of hades is let loose.

To give this picture equipoise we have that of Polonius, Ophelia, Laertes, we have here paternal, filial, and fraternal love. We also have trust, obedience, reverence, honor, generosity, in fact everything that is in contradistinction to the other family group.

With one other example of the balance and proportion in the tragedy I will leave the student to work out the rest.

One of the strongest contrasts, perhaps, in the play is the death of Ophelia versus the death of Gertrude. In death Ophelia's features were calm, peaceful, placid, while Gertrude's wore that drawn expression and frightened stare found in a poisoned chalice.

Throughout the play we see Hamlet full of the desire to do, without the will power and force to execute. He is full of that

blue light that iridesces from a smoldering fire—no heat at first, but at any time it may burst into a consuming blaze.

We feel the etherealness of Ophelia, we know her nature is like the gossamer thread hanging from the sky of azure which the lightest zephyr catches and takes where it listeth. She is like the snow flake on the river—a moment seen, then gone forever. But with her going we feel

"Joy; joy forever!

Her task is done

The gates are pass'd

And heaven is won"

Mrs. Charles Tidwell Phelan

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Chairman Department of Literature of the Dallas Woman's Forum;
Third Vice-President Dallas Federation of Woman's Clubs,
and Director of the Dallas History Club.**

Suggested Programme

Permanent Assignment of References.

- (a) History.
- (b) Bible.
- (c) Mythology.
- (d) Orthoepey.
- (e) Geography. (Map tracing
Transition of scenes.)
- (f) Scansion.
- (g) Law terms.
- (h) Obsolete and obscure words.

Paper—The Ghosts of Shakespeare.

Paper—The Historical Setting of Hamlet.

Paper—The Development of the English Drama.

Paper—Shakespeare the Man.

Paper—Shakespeare the Poet.

Table Talk—Incidents from Shakespeare's life.

A Sketch—Denmark.

Paper—A group of Norwegian Myths or The Religion of the Northmen.

Scene Work—(memorized and acted)—Act I, Scene V.

Dramatis Personae—Ghost—Hamlet.

Paper—Analysis of the Myths in the Tragedy of Hamlet.

Scene Work—Act II, Scene I (memorized).

Dramatis personae—Ophelia—Polonius.

One Minute Concepts—Ophelia's love for Hamlet.

Character Sketch—Polonius as Father, Statesman and Man.

Table Talk—Ophelia's Defections.

Paper—The Law in Shakespeare.

Discussion—The Supernatural versus The Natural in the Tragedy
of Hamlet.

Memorize Scene V, Act IV—Dramatis Personae—Queen, Gentle-
man, Horatio, Ophelia, King, Laertes.

A Comparison—The Gertrude of History—The Gertrude of
Shakespeare.

Paper—Character Contrasts in the Tragedy of Hamlet.

One Minute Concepts—Hamlet's relation to King Claudius.

A Sketch—Horatio.

Pantomime—The Grave Diggers Scene.

Reading—The Ghost.

Table Talk—The Mental, Moral, and Vital side of Hamlet's
nature.

One Minute Concepts—The Puns in the Play.

The Tragedy of Hamlet

Introduction.

- 1—To what period of Shakespeare's work does Hamlet belong?
- 2—To what class does it belong?
- 3—Why is the play of Hamlet forever suggestive and never wholly explicable?
- 4—How does this obscurity become a vital part of the play?
- 5—Of what history is this play a dramatization?
- 6—What incidents in that history did Shakespeare use in his play?
- 7—To what German play is Hamlet supposed to bear some resemblance?
- 8—Where is the scene of this drama laid?
- 9—Into what parts is a drama divided? Define each part.
- 10—What is the central point in the play of Hamlet?
- 11—How did the creation of Hamlet come into being?
- 12—Did Shakespeare feel the significance of external nature as the environing medium of human passions?
- 13—Give reason for your deduction.
- 14—Can man be independent of the social and moral conditions under which he lives?
- 15—Apply your deductions to the play of Hamlet.
- 16—What was the first great call made upon Hamlet concerning the world in which he lived?
17. Was Hamlet an Idealist?
- 18—Was he a pessimist?
- 19—How was Hamlet's power of acting crippled?
- 20—How old was Hamlet at opening of the play?
- 21—Hamlet received every kind of culture except one—what was it?
- 22—To what may this be attributed?
- 23—Note throughout the entire play Hamlet's inability to adjust the infinite part of him to the finite and ascertain, (a) the effect upon his nature, (b) the effect upon his mind, (c) the effect upon the spiritual side of his being.

- 24—Which plays the greater part in Hamlet's life, materialism or spiritualism?

Act I—Scene 1.

- 1—How would you change the spirit of Scene I when Horatio and Marcellus enter?
- 2—What is the atmosphere of Scene 1?
- 3—Give examples showing that the belief in Shakespeare's day was that the elements and human affairs were closely connected.
- 4—With what words does Francisco touch the emotional chord that vibrates through the play?
- 5—Why is the chord touched in the first scene?
- 6—What hint is given us in Act I, Scene I of the superstitions of Shakespeare's time?
- 7—What part of Horatio was not with him when Bernardo asks "Is Horatio there?"
- 8—Why does the Ghost stalk away when Horatio addresses it?
- 9—How far can supernatural agencies influence persons in the drama?
- 10—What does the conversation about the Ghost having twice before gone by the watch, tell us of the future action of the tragedy, and of the condition of the state?
- 11—What is there in Scene I that shows us that Shakespeare loved the characters grouped around Julius Caesar?
- 12—Give examples of the belief in supernatural agencies current in Shakespeare's time.
- 13—Analyze "I'll cross it, though it blast me."

Act I—Scene 2.

- 1—(a) Analyze the King's speech and find the formal tones in it. (b) Find where joy and sorrow are over-lapped and blended. (c) Find the condition of the kingdom at this time.
- 2—Define "You cannot speak of reason to the Dane, and lose your voice."
- 3—When Hamlet first stands before us what is his condition, physically and mentally?
- 4—What is the meaning of Hamlet's speech, "A little more than kin and less than kind?"

- 5—From the conversation with the King and Queen and from his soliloquy can we form a very accurate opinion of Hamlet's mental and emotional condition at the beginning of the drama?
- 6—Is the giving of information the dramatic purpose of the conversation and the soliloquy?
- 7—What effect does the King's moralizing have on Hamlet?
- 8—What is Hamlet's source of relief?
- 9—How does the Queen receive Hamlet's demonstration of irritability?
- 10—What changes have occurred in the interview between the King, the Queen and Hamlet?
- 11—What effect do these changes have upon the scene?
- 12—What two important things have thrust themselves on Hamlet's mind in Scene 2?
- 13—Was the Queen's love founded on the essential or the accidental elements of life?
- 14—What elements do you find in the last part of Scene 2?
- 15—What kind of scene is the latter part of Scene 2?
- 16—What is Hamlet's mental condition at the end of Scene 2?
- 17—Why is this condition shown so early in the play?
- 18—What dramatic forecasts have we had up to this stage of the play?

Act I, Scene 3.

- 1—To what group of personages does Scene 3 introduce us?
- 2—Give salient traits of each character in the group.
- 3—What is Laertes' part in the play?
- 4—Is there a comic element in Scene 3?
- 5—What warning does Laertes give his sister in reference to Hamlet's attentions?
- 6—What is the dramatic purpose of this warning?
- 7—From what book did Polonius read his advice to Laertes?
- 8—Of what does Polonius' wisdom consist?
- 9—What would the conversation between Ophelia and her father lead you to expect from the attachment that had been formed between Ophelia and Hamlet?
- 10—Why did Laertes mistrust Hamlet?
- 11—Has Ophelia shown any signs of weakness or defection in Scene 3?

- 12—What present day convention was told Ophelia by her father?
- 13—What is the dramatic function of Polonius' advice to Ophelia?
- 14—Was there real love between Ophelia and Laertes? Analyze their feelings for each other.
- 15—How much authority had Polonius in the King's household?
- 16—What idea have you formed of Hamlet's nature from the first three scenes of the play?

Act I, Scene 4.

- 1—At the beginning of Scene 4, why the words, "It is an eager and a nipping air?"
- 2—Why the flourish of trumpets at the hour when Hamlet is waiting for the appearance of the Ghost?
- 3—Why does Scene 4 open with a conversation on the trivial details of the weather, the hour and the drinking habits of Denmark?
- 4—Why does Hamlet speak about the drinking habits of the King and of his countrymen?
- 5—What strong plea for pre-natal environment in this scene?
- 6—What contradictions of this plea have we in character contrast throughout the play?
- 7—Do you think pre-natal influence had anything to do with Hamlet's nature?
- 8—In what stage of civilization is the force of heredity chiefly displayed?
- 9—Discussion, "Heredity is habit writ in large."
- 10—Analyze emotions in Scene 4.
- 11—Was Hamlet a fatalist, or did he merely depend upon accidents for his motives and impulses?
- 12—Find central thought in Scene 4.
- 13—Why does Horatio see the Ghost in Scene 4 before Hamlet sees it?
- 14—What cause does Hamlet give for his fearlessness in following the Ghost?
- 15—What inference as to the condition of Denmark does Marcellus draw from the visit of the Ghost?
- 16—Is there the element of growth in Scene 4?
- 17—How do you account for Horatio's fear in Scene 4?

- 18—What dramatic law does the conversation between Hamlet and Horatio fulfill?
- 19—How does this conversation enhance the scene?
- 20—What types of character in Scene 4?

Act I, Scene 5.

- 1—What two thoughts are planted in Hamlet's mind by the Ghost?
- 2—What information as to his present condition, and as to the manner of his death, does the Ghost give to Hamlet?
- 3—What does the belief in the Ghost suggest to our minds concerning spiritualism?
- 4—Comment on the Ghost's charge to Hamlet regarding Hamlet's mother.
- 5—Does the interview with the Ghost make the turning point in Hamlet's life?
- 6—May the terms objective and subjective be applied to ghosts?
- 7—What is the function of a ghost in a plot?
- 8—May supernatural agencies influence events without influencing persons?
- 9—Do the events always agree with the prediction?
- 10—Does foreknowledge imply predestination?
- 11—How is it possible for the ghost to make the revelation to Hamlet?
- 12—Does the individual have to give consent before supernatural agencies can influence them? Give examples.
- 13—Do supernatural agencies initiate or alter, or do they emphasize and assist?
- 14—Is the supernatural function in Shakespeare's plays addressed to the persons in the story, or to the spectator of the drama?
- 15—Why the words of the Ghost "But that I am forbid to tell the secrets of my prison-house," etc.?
- 16—Do these words shift Shakespeare's responsibility?
- 17—Why does Hamlet set it down in his tables that Claudius is a smiling damned villain?
- 18—Does Hamlet's remark when the Ghost makes its exit manifest the cardinal traits of his character?
- 19—Why did Hamlet answer Horatio and Marcellus evasively?

- 20—How does the Ghost's emphasis to Hamlet's request to "swear by the sword" effect you?
- 21—Why does Hamlet assume an antic disposition after the interview with the Ghost?
- 22—Why does he assume madness?
- 23—What is Hamlet's immediate need at this moment?
- 24—Has Hamlet formed a definite plan of revenge?
- 25—Does Hamlet's assumed madness assist or retard his action?
- 26—Give the effect that Hamlet's present condition has upon the different persons in the drama?
- 27—How are his mimetics and mockery compensated?
- 28—Does Hamlet's letting go his terrible duty and then returning to it, imply weakness or strength?
- 29—Remember question 28, Act I, Scene 5, as it will help you in the comparison and comprehension of Hamlet's traits.
- 30—Do the closing words of Act I uttered by Hamlet foreshadow the main action of the drama? (b) Do you consider them the key-note of the drama? (c) What is the key-note of a drama?
- 32—What has been accomplished in Act I?
- 33—What is the dramatic function of the first act of a drama?
- 34—Are the unities ever violated in this respect by Shakespeare?

Act II, Scene 1.

- 1—In Act I, Scene 3, we had Polonius posing as a moralist. What do we learn of Polonius' morality at the opening of Act II?
- 2—Upon what persons in the drama do the morals of Polonius reflect?
- 3—Why does Shakespeare give the information about Hamlet's appearance and condition during his interview with Ophelia, by means of narrative instead of action?
- 4—(a) What is gradation in the drama? (b) What is anti-climax?
- 5—How had Ophelia lately received Hamlet's advances?
- 6—What is one of the principal emotions in Act II, Scene 1?
- 7—What prompted Hamlet to go to Ophelia's closet?
- 8—What did he expect of Ophelia?
- 9—Why did he fall to such perusal of Ophelia's face?
- 10—What did he read in her face?
- 11—Why did he not speak instead of sigh?

- 12—How might this interview have changed the entire play?
- 13—What line in Ophelia's description of the interview describes Sir Henry Irving's impersonation of Shylock?
- 14—What development in Polonius' character since the opening of the play?
- 15—Comment on Polonius' view of Hamlet's appearance in Ophelia's closet.
- 16—To what do you attribute Hamlet's "piteous look," "Pale as shirt," his knees knocking each other, etc., as he comes to Ophelia?
- 17—What does Victor Hugo say of Hamlet as a tragedy?
- 18—What is meant by "This must be known, which being kept close might move more grief to hide than hate to utter love?"
- 19—How does Shakespeare show us that he loved Hamlet beyond all his other creations?
- 20—What is said to have been one of Shakespeare's modes of creating character?
- 21—To what knowledge of Shakespeare's may the character of Hamlet be traced?
- 22—How may we assume that this character must have some connection with the common fundamental laws of human nature?
- 23—How does Mrs. Jameson characterize Ophelia?
- 24—What is the most pathetic situation in Act II, Scene 1?

Act II, Scene 2.

- 1—What new elements enter into the play at the beginning of Scene 2?
- 2—How much time does the play of Hamlet cover, as represented on the stage?
- 3—How much time is consumed in the first two acts?
- 4—Why does the Queen think Rosencrantz and Guildenstern can draw Hamlet out of his melancholy? (b) Why did the King have faith in them?
- 5—When does the Queen resort to small talk? Why?
- 6—Why the transposition of names by the Queen after the King has thanked Rosencrantz and Guildenstern?
- 7—What did the Queen believe to be the cause of Hamlet's distemper?

- 8—Hamlet's condition affects the King, Queen, and Polonius each in a different way. Is this analogous to the ordinary way in which different people interpret the same thing?
- 9—Comment on Polonius' art and brevity when telling the King and Queen the cause of Hamlet's defect.
- 10—Do you consider Hamlet "ill at these numbers?"
- 11—How does Polonius speak for himself in Scene 2?
- 12—(a) What is the purport of the odd letter from Hamlet to Ophelia? (b) Do you think Hamlet wrote it to test Ophelia's penetration of his nature?
- 13—Why does Ophelia give his letters up so docilely and betray his secrets so unshrinkingly?
- 14—Upon what principle does Hamlet constantly act?
- 15—When Hamlet is accosted by Polonius in what does Hamlet's irony consist?
- 16—In what satire does Hamlet indulge?
- 17—How has Shakespeare shown his knowledge of insanity?
- 18—What is the office of Voltimand and Cornilius in this scene?
- 19—To what do you attribute the numerous plays upon words in which Hamlet indulges?
- 20—Some have thought that Rosencrants and Guildenstern should have been compressed into one. Do you think these soft approaches, this smirking and bowing, this assenting, wheedling flattery, this whisking agility, this wagging of the tail, this allness and emptiness, this legal knavery, this ineptitude and insipidity, could be expressed by a single man?
- 21—What traits are revealed in the interview between these two men and Hamlet?
- 22—What does this interview reveal of the quality of Hamlet's intellect?
- 23—What dramatic forecast in this interview?
- 24—What innovation caused the inhibition of the actors?
- 25—Why the change from poetry to prose in Act II, Scene 2?
- 26—What subtlety does Hamlet show in Act II, Scene 2?
- 27—When does he reach the climax of his subtlety?
- 28—What is the dramatic function of Hamlet's soliloquy in Act II, Scene 2?
- 29—Would the soliloquies in the tragedy of Hamlet make a complete story in themselves?

- 30—Does Hamlet show a cunning in apprehending the mission of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern?
- 31—What is the meaning of "I am but mad north-northwest etc.?"
- 32—Is there any importance attached to Polonius' division of the drama?
- 33—From what song did Hamlet quote when he said, "O Jephtha, Judge of Israel, what a treasure had'st thou?"
- 34—Why did Hamlet call the player "my young lady and mistress?"
- 35—What is the meaning of "'twas caviare to the general?"
- 36—Where in this scene do you find the best example of hospitality?
- 37—Do you find anything in Scene 2 upon which to base the theory of Hamlet's madness?
- 38—Do you find anything in Scene 2 that sustains the theory that Hamlet's madness was feigned?
- 39—What action does Scene 2 foreshadow?
- 40—(a) What does Taine say of the history of Hamlet? (b) What does he say regarding Hamlet's madness?
- 41—What old proverbs are suggested to you in Act II, Scene 2?

Act III, Scene 1.

- 1—The Queen, King, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, Polonius and Ophelia are all used to ascertain whether Hamlet is mad, how mad and the cause; they are baffled, does this prove anything to you?
- 2—Describe Polonius.
- 3—What are Hamlet's arguments for and against suicide voiced in his soliloquy "To be or not to be," etc.?
- 4—What is the difference between his views on suicide in this soliloquy and, "oh, that this too, too solid flesh would melt," or that the Everlasting had not fixed His canon gainst self slaughter?
- 5—What does the soliloquy "To be or not to be" reveal of Hamlet's nature?
- 6—Was Hamlet unnecessarily harsh to Ophelia?
- 7—How did the harshness effect you?
- 8—Did Ophelia deceive Hamlet?

- 9—Where in this scene does Hamlet show himself to be a wit?
- 10—What inference does the King draw from Hamlet's soliloquy and his words to Ophelia?
- 11—What pathetic revelation of herself does Ophelia give in her soliloquy uttered after Hamlet's departure?
- 12—What is one of the dramatic functions of this soliloquy?
- 13—How has Shakespeare prepared us for the climax of the tragedy?
- 14—What double motive or impulse is at work in Act III, Scene 1
- 15—Act III strikes a new note in the play, what is it?
- 16—What trait is developing in Ophelia?
- 17—Is Ophelia a good actress?
- 18—What in Hamlet's soliloquy "To be or not to be," is active? What passive?
- 19—Why does Hamlet repeat "to sleep?"
- 20—Why does Hamlet stop in his soliloquy and address Ophelia?
- 21—Do you think Ophelia was guileless and innocent, or the reverse?
- 22—What arouses Hamlet's indignation toward Ophelia?
- 23—What is one of the deepest longings of Hamlet's nature?
- 24—Was Hamlet's outburst against Ophelia due to cruelty or pain?
- 25—Do you think Ophelia's mind begins to fail in Act III, Scene 1? Give reason for your opinion.
- 26—What dramatic forecasts in Act III, Scene 1?
- 27—What further development in Polonius' nature?
- 28—To what point in the drama has Act III, Scene 1, brought us?

Act III, Scene 2.

- 1—After the proof of Ophelia's incapacity to understand Hamlet to whom does he turn? With what effect?
- 2—What does Horatio recognize to be his highest duty?
- 3—Which is the rarer nature of the two, Hamlet or Horatio?
- 4—Which side of Hamlet's nature is in the ascendancy at the opening of Scene 2, the mental, moral, or physical?
- 5—What kind of nature had Horatio?
- 6—Why does Hamlet confide in Horatio?
- 7—What, according to Hamlet, is the mission of the drama?

- 8—What is the meaning of "And let those that play your clowns speak no more than is set down for them?"
- 9—To what do you attribute Hamlet's knowledge of the drama and of acting?
- 10—What does Hamlet's description of Horatio's character reveal to you?
- 11—Was Hamlet "a pipe for fortune's finger?"
- 12—What psychological study in Act III, Scene 2?
- 13—What have we of the soul's measure of time in Scene 2?
- 14—What is the meaning of "They are coming to the play, I must be idle?"
- 15—Why does Hamlet decline a seat near his mother?
- 16—What, in this scene of the players, is like electric sparks which scintillate and snap while the current is streaming to its receptacle?
- 17—How does Ophelia regard all this?
- 18—Contrast Hamlet's conduct and words before and after the entrance of the Queen, King, Polonius and Ophelia.
- 19—Is the dramatic function of this play within the play to bring the action of the drama to a climax?
- 20—What is the meaning of dramatic climax?
- 21—Which lines in the play within the play were inserted by Hamlet?
- 22—What is the condition of the different persons during the play within the play?
- 23—What follows the ascertaining of Claudius' guilt?
- 24—Why does Hamlet call for music?
- 25—How does Hamlet treat Rosencrantz and Guildenstern when they haunt his footsteps after the play?
- 26—How do they act concerning the parable of the recorders?
- 27—What attitude is Hamlet assuming toward his foes?
- 28—What is meant by "Chameleon's dish?"
- 29—Who was Hecate?
- 30—Define "Half a share."
- 31—Define "By these pickers and stealers."
- 32—What does Hamlet's soliloquy at the end of Act III, Scene 2, reveal to you?
- 33—What is the finest fancy in Act III, Scene 2?
- 34—Is Scene 2, Act III, the acme of the climax of the drama?
- 35—How many kinds of love do you find in Scenes 1 and 2 of Act III?

- 36—Give example of the noblest love
- 37—What is the function of Hamlet's talk with Polonius at the end of Scene 2, Act III?

Act III, Scene 3.

- 1—Does Scene 3 follow history or depart from it?
- 2—Upon what plot does Scene 3 open?
- 3—What plea is offered in extenuation of this plot?
- 4—Why did the King want to send Hamlet to England?
- 5—What old adage recurs to your mind when Polonius steps behind the arras?
- 6—What revelation of the murder; what of his mental, and moral condition does the King make in his soliloquy?
- 7—Why cannot the King repent? Why cannot he pray?
- 8—What biblical law is parallel to this soliloquy?
- 9—What in this soliloquy shows grandeur in the King? Wherein do you find discipline?
- 10—Why did not Hamlet kill the King while he was praying? Which of Hamlet's traits do we see repeated here?
- 11—Why did Shakespeare show us the King at prayer and reveal Hamlet's intention to kill him?
- 12—Comment on "My words fly up, my thoughts remain below. Words without thought never to Heaven go."
- 13—What other Bible reference do you find in Act III, Scene 3?
- 14—What allusion in the King's soliloquy?
- 15—What does the soliloquy reveal of the King's nature?
- 16—Sum up happenings of the day on which Hamlet went to his mother's closet.

Act III, Scene 4.

- 1—Give stage setting for Scene 4.
- 2—What is the environing action of Scene 4?
- 3—Why could Polonius take such liberties with the Queen?
- 4—Does Hamlet accuse his mother of participating in the murder of his father?
- 5—Does this scene accord with history?
- 6—What is meant by the "rood?"
- 7—What characterization of Polonius does Hamlet make?
- 8—What is the function of Polonius in this drama?

- 9—How does Hamlet's accusations and taunts with which he chides his mother affect you?
- 10—What is the meaning of "And sets a blister there?"
- 11—How did the Queen first show guilt in the interview with Hamlet?
- 12—What attitude does the Queen assume during Hamlet's arraignment of her? Are you in sympathy with her?
- 13—What effect do Hamlet's words have upon her?
- 14—Why does Shakespeare cause Hamlet to kill Polonius at this time?
- 15—Why did the murder of Polonius seem a trivial incident to Hamlet at first, to be so bewept by him later?
- 16—Give the different interpretations of how the pictures of the murdered King and the King-Uncle were shown by Hamlet to his mother.
- 17—What, in a former speech, Act III, Scene 2, reveals the spirit in which Hamlet went to his mother's closet?
- 18—Give two reasons for the appearance of the Ghost in this scene.
- 19—Where in literature do you find a thought correspondent with "O step between her and her fighting soul?"
- 20—Define, "Do not look upon me; lest with this piteous look you convert my stern effects," etc.
- 21—How does Hamlet convince the Queen that it is not his madness, but her trespass, which speaks?
- 22—Do you agree with Hamlet in "Assume a virtue if you have it not. That monster, custom, who all sense doth eat; of habits devil, is angel yet in this, that to the use of actions fair and good he likewise gives a livery that aptly is put on?"
- 23—Does abstinence from evil kill the desire to do evil?
- 24—Which is the greater virtue, the devil thrown out or the devil mastered?
- 25—Why did the Ghost appear "in his habit as he lived?"
- 26—Sum up principal events of Act III.
- 27—How do you think Hamlet knew that the King was going to send him to England?
- 28—What do Hamlet's words about circumventing the plot of the King reveal?
- 29—What does the parting description of Polonius and his indifference to the corpse show of Hamlet's nature?

- 30—Why did Hamlet remove the corpse from the Queen's closet?
- 31—In Scene 3 of Act III we reach the dramatic climax, what have we done in Scene 4?
- 32—Find the moral of Scene 4.
- 33—Find the strength and weakness of Act III.
- 34—Find the central thought in Act III.
- 35—What are the ethics of Act III?
- 36—How much stage time has Act III consumed?
- 37—What is the difference between stage time and ordinary time?
- 38—What is the strongest dramatic situation in Act III?
- 39—What are the principal emotions in Act III?

Act IV, Scene 1.

- 1—What is Hamlet's condition at opening of Scene 1, Act IV?
- 2—What is the King's pretext for sending Hamlet to England?
- 3—What kind of scene is Scene 1, Act IV?
- 4—What reaction takes place in Hamlet after the interview with his mother, and the killing of Polonius?
- 5—What does the King fear will be the effect upon the people, of the murder of Polonius?
- 6—What traits do we find in the Queen's character when she says that Hamlet is as mad as the sea and wind?
- 7—Define "o'er the world's diameter."

Act IV, Scene 2 and 3.

- 1—What is Hamlet's condition at the opening of Scene 2?
- 2—Has Hamlet changed any during the progress of the play?
- 3—What kind of scene is Scene 2?
- 4—What idea dominates Scene 2?
- 5—What is the attitude of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern in Scene 2?
- 6—What game is used in simile in Act IV, Scene 2?
- 7—Give best example of sarcasm in Act IV, Scenes 1 to 5.
- 8—(a) Why did the King wish Hamlet dead? (b) Why did the King fear to kill Hamlet? (c) Why did the King send Hamlet to England to be murdered instead of having him executed in Denmark?

- 9—Analyze "A certain convocation of politic worms are e'en at him?"
- 10—What reflection suggested by the dead body of Polonius does Hamlet utter?
- 11—What is the meaning of Hamlet's response to the King "I see a cherub," etc.?
- 12—What is the King's premise in Scene 3?
- 13—Why is Hamlet under guard?
- 14—What do we learn of the relation between Denmark and England in Scene 3?
- 15—What trait does Hamlet leave behind him when he is despatched to England?

Act IV, Scene 4.

- 1—What is the dramatic purpose of Scene 4?
- 2—What traits in Hamlet's nature hang on the word "of" in Act IV, Scene 4?
- 3—What does Hamlet conceive to be the guiding principle of a man's life?
- 4—In what respect have we a new Hamlet at the beginning of Scene 4?
- 5—Since Polonius' death was accidental how did Hamlet view it?
- 6—How does Hamlet accept the necessity of his going to England?
- 7—What does the arrival of Fortinbras contribute to the play?
- 8—In what does Fortinbras excel Hamlet?
- 9—What is Hamlet's attitude toward life when he realizes that "all occasions inform against him?"
- 10—Does his life reach a climax in this scene?
- 11—What estimate has he of himself?

Act IV, Scene 5.

- 1—Give the environment of Scene 5.
- 2—Analyze lines 11, 12, 13, in Scene 5.
- 3—Comment on lines 19 and 20, Scene 5.
- 4—What were the causes of Ophelia's insanity?
- 5—What is the Queen's attitude toward Ophelia?

- 6—Is there anything in Ophelia's madness to sustain the theory that she was not virtuous?
- 7—What is the environing action of Scene 5?
- 8—What is the meaning of "the unshap'd use of it doth move the hearers to collection?"
- 9—Does the change in Ophelia's condition indicate progress towards the catastrophe of the drama?
- 10—What does Sir Joshua Reynolds say of the scene between Ophelia and the Queen in Act IV, Scene 5?
- 11—From what is the word "pansy" taken?
- 12—Give the language of the flowers mentioned in Scene 5?
- 13—What sentence in Scene 5, original with Shakespeare, has become a proverb?
- 14—Define "buzzers."
- 15—What is Laertes' condition upon his arrival in Denmark?
- 16—Is the effect of Polonius' death still further heightened by the distressing condition of Ophelia?
- 17—What proposition in reference to the death of Polonius does the King make to Laertes in order to mollify him?
- 18—Does the introduction of Laertes still further aid in hastening the resolution of the drama?
- 19—Is Laertes, in his prompt and insistent demands for revenge, a perfect contrast to Hamlet?
- 20—Is he intended by Shakespeare to be so?
- 21—What dramatic purpose is accomplished thereby?
- 22—What traits of character does the King's management of Laertes reveal?
- 23—How does the King manage Laertes?
- 24—What legend is hinted at in Scene 5?
- 25—In what difficulties does the King find himself in scene 5?
- 26—What mental emotion dominates the King in Scene 5?
- 27—How has Shakespeare again shown his knowledge of insanity?
- 28—Where in Scene 5 does the Queen show supreme mother love?
- 29—What is the most pathetic thing in Scene 5?
- 30—Define "wheel" as used in Scene 5?
- 31—What is the sentiment of the rabble in Scene 5?
- 32—Does the voice of the rabble influence public opinion?

Act IV, Scene 6.

- 1—What is the principal function of the fourth act of the drama?
- 2—How does Hamlet compare with Othello as an acting play?
- 3—Under what varied circumstances is Hamlet portrayed?
- 4—What is the dramatic purpose of Scene 6?
- 5—Why are the events in Scene 6 told by narrative instead of action?
- 6—What does Scene 6 show of Hamlet's perspicacity?
- 7—What is the chief emotion in Scene 6?
- 8—Why is Scene 6 such a short one?
- 9—What is the function of stage letters?

Act IV, Scene 7.

- 1—What is there in Scene 7 that rings like true metal; what like false?
- 2—What word in Scene 7 defines all the action in the tragedy?
- 3—What beautiful attributes, and what ugly ones of the King does scene 7 reveal?
- 4—Define "An exploit now ripe in my device?"
- 5—What passions are used in the construction of Scene 7? Comment on the use and abuse of them.
- 6—What divine attributes does the King say Hamlet possesses?
- 7—Melancholy is one hinge of the tragedy of Hamlet, what is another?
- 8—What in Hamlet's letter strikes terror to the heart of the King?
- 9—What part does the letter play in the drama?
- 10—What is the meaning of "spendthrift sigh?" Of "Sanctuarize?"
- 11—Do you know of a book where the cry of "Sanctuary! sanctuary!" is the climax?
- 12—What is the dramatic effect of the poetic description of the "willow," "brook," "fantastic garlands," etc.?
- 13—What is the meaning of "This folly doubts it?"
- 14—Has Shakespeare made every preparation for the catastrophe of the drama in Act IV?
- 15—Outline the preparations as you find them.

- 16—What subtleties in Scene 7?
- 17—What double cunning does the King show?
- 18—What is the plan in Scene 7?
- 19—What in Scene 7 proclaims the King a hardened criminal?
- 20—Why has Shakespeare shown us redeeming qualities in him side by side with the criminal?
- 21—What is the atmosphere of Scene 7?
- 22—What is meant by atmosphere in a play?
- 23—Why are the sentences so long in the Queen's speech to Laertes?
- 24—What is the central idea in Scene 7?
- 25—What is the climax in Scene 7?

Act V, Scene 1.

- 1—Why does Shakespeare introduce the Clowns in this act?
Give two reasons for his doing so.
- 2—What does their conversation constitute?
- 3—What types do the Clowns represent?
- 4—Account for the first Clown's use of Latin.
- 5—Why does first Clown follow forms in speaking?
- 6—What impediment of speech has the second Clown?
- 7—What celebrated case under "Crowners quest law" resembles this of Ophelia?
- 8—In what sense does Shakespeare here and always use the word politician?
- 9—Find points of wit and wisdom in the grave-digging scene.
- 10—Find the greatest pathos in this scene.
- 11—What age stood for youth in Shakespeare's opinion? Contrast with our own times.
- 12—What sarcasm does the Clown throw at England?
- 13—Analyze Hamlet's apostrophe to Yorick.
- 14—What word in Scene 1, Act V, shows the greatest force of expression?
- 15—Define "Eisel."
- 16—Give examples in Scene 1, of Shakespeare's knowledge of bird life.
- 17—Does Scene 1, Act V, hold any surprise for you?
- 18—Give stage business when 2nd Clown goes out after a stoup of liquor.

- 19—What attitude does Hamlet assume toward the grave-digger?
- 20—What traits in the Queen's character are revealed in Scene 1, Act V?
- 21—What transcendent virtues are shown in Laertes? Compare Hamlet and Laertes in this scene.
- 22—Where in Scene 1 does Hamlet show irony?
- 23—Why was Hamlet's conversation with the 1st Clown?
- 24—What is the nature of Scene 1, Act V?
- 25—Has the main action been active or quiescent in Scene 1?
- 26—Has there been any dramatic progress in Scene 1?
- 27—What word of Lady Macbeth's perfectly characterizes Hamlet?
- 28—What does Ophelia's burial show us of the religion of Denmark?
- 29—Is this religion responsible for the paltry actions of Claudius, and the aimless wanderings of Hamlet?
- 30—What are the sacred words of truth and peace and consolation given to the wounded hearts of Ophelia's kindred?
- 31—What kind of scene is Scene 1, Act V?
- 32—What is the strongest emotion in Scene 1, Act V?
- 33—What is the most dramatic situation in Scene 1, Act V?

Act V, Scene 2.

- 1—Why is the incident of Hamlet's rescue by the pirate ship told by narrative?
- 2—What is the technical name for this method of imparting information?
- 3—What is the nature of this part of Scene 2?
- 4—Define "Mutines in the bilboes."
- 5—What calm and practical response does Horatio make to Hamlet's statements and questions?
- 6—Does Hamlet draw the proper inference therefrom? What was that inference?
- 7—Did Hamlet mistrust Osric?
- 8—Define "I am satisfied in nature."
- 9—Does Shakespeare manifest fine technique in making the Queen unintentionally commit suicide? Give reasons for your opinion?

- 10—In what words does Horatio describe the plot of the play?
- 11—What words spoken by King Duncan apply to Hamlet?
Compare Macbeth, Act III, Scene 2, line 23.
- 12—What was the effect on Hamlet of Ophelia's lack of moral strength?
- 13—Is Shakespeare's portrayal of motherhood a manifestation of one of his limitations? (b) Is the same true of his portrayal of married life?
- 14—Between what two young men in this play does Hamlet's nature stand?
- 15—What character in this play is generally believed to have been acted by Shakespeare at the Globe and Blackfriars theatres?
- 16—What is the most meaningful phrase in Scene 2, Act V?
- 17—How does the play of Hamlet compare in length with the other plays?
- 18—How does the number of lines spoken by Hamlet compare with any other character in any one play?
- 19—What in Scene 2 outlines Hamlet's character?
- 20—What revelations in Scene 2?
- 21—What is the moral of Scene 2?
- 22—What of the aesthetics in Scene 2?
- 23—Why is there a break in Hamlet's long story in Scene 2?
- 24—Find the important pauses in the reading of Scene 2.
- 25—What is the value of the pause in the reading?
- 26—Show how poetic justice demanded and justified the King's death.
- 27—What is poetic justice?
- 28—Give character delineation of Osric.
- 29—What gave you the cue to the delineation?
- 30—Find peculiar words in Scene 2.
- 31—Find philosophical truths in Scene 2.
- 32—Find psychological situations in Scene 2.
- 33—Find and define figures of speech in Scene 2.
- 34—What is the value of figures of speech?
- 35—What is Aristotle's rule governing the end of a drama?
- 36—Does the tragedy of Hamlet meet the requirements of this rule?
- 37—What of the analytical quality of Scene 2?
- 38—How much of analysis is helpful to the understanding of a play, and to what extent is it a detriment?

- 39—Wherein does Hamlet show insolence to the King that is veiled in ostensible obedience and loyalty?
- 40—What is the greatest and most unerring psychological truth in the tragedy of Hamlet?
- 41—What does the conversation between Hamlet and Laertes reveal of their motives?
- 42—What subtleties in Scene 2? By whom practiced?
- 43—Where is the climax in Scene 2?
- 44—Why the line "He's fat and scant of breath?"
- 45—How many instances of poetic justice in Scene 2?
- 46—How many in the entire play?
- 47—What reversion of feelings in Scene 2?
- 48—What allusions in Scene 2?
- 49—What line in Scene 2 is the true utterance of the infinite, the language of immortality?
- 50—What is the condition of the state at the close of the play?
- 51—Does Horatio tell Hamlet's story?
- 52—Upon whom do the honors rest at the close of the awful tragedy?
- 53—Did he earn the honors?
- 54—Why the command, "Go, bid the soldiers shoot"?
- 55—Give the stage setting for the closing scene of Hamlet.

Addenda.

- 1—What is one of the peculiarities of the play of Hamlet that places upon it the stamp of universality?
- 2—How has the characterization of Ophelia by the actresses, reflected on the character of Hamlet?
- 3—Give the two sides of Ophelia's character.
- 4—Is there a touch of conscious bitterness in Shakespeare's portraiture of her?
- 5—Is she the mediate cause of the terrible tragedy in which she and Hamlet are swept away?
- 6—Contrast Lady Macbeth's and Ophelia's method in attaining the same end.
- 7—Compare Ophelia's nature to "the soul of the unlit lamp and the ungirt loins" in Browning's "The Statue and the Bust."
- 8—Which dominated Ophelia's life regard for the proprieties, or appreciation of moral purpose?

- 9—How does Shakespeare trump his dramatic ace in the establishment of Ophelia's passivity?
- 10—Compare Ophelia's lie with Desdemona's.
- 11—What is the final charge against Ophelia's utterance of that faltering lie?
- 12—Is Ophelia a mental mediocrity?
- 13—Wherein has Shakespeare shown his relentlessness toward Ophelia?
- 14—What is the one decided act of Ophelia's life?
- 15—Show how Shakespeare has produced a clear and concrete figure by subtracting, and studiously cutting away the scaffolding that supported Hamlet.
- 16—What characters in the play formed the page on which the dark broodings and forebodings of the Wittenberg scholar were clearly printed?
- 17—Glean particulars of Edwin Booth's Hamlet.
- 18—What was John Quincy Adams' criticism of Hamlet?
- 19—How did Henry Irving show Hamlet's love for Ophelia?
- 20—What was Mr. Beerbohm Tree's failure and success as Hamlet?
- 21—Wherein consists Forbes Robertson's power to play Hamlet?
- 22—Why are women a failure at playing Hamlet?
- 23—When and by whom was the only known performance of Hamlet given entirely by women?
- 24—Who was the first Hamlet in New York?
- 25—N. B.: These actor notes are not necessary, but any information you may gather adds interest, as every actor gives a different interpretation of the play.
- 26—What kind of a tragedy is Hamlet?
- 27—Divide the main plot into as many parts as you can.
- 28—(a) Who represents the greater crime? (b) What kind of Nemesis follows?
- 29—(a) Who represents the lesser crime? (b) What is the nature of the Nemesis?
- 30—(a) What does Polonius represent in the play. (b) What kind of Nemesis follows him?
- 31—(a) What do Guildenstern and Rosencrantz represent? (b) Is there a Nemesis?
- 32—(a) What does Ophelia represent? (b) What kind of Nemesis ensues?

